

Consideration on Expression in Paul Klee's Primitivism ——Form and Line in His Drawing of Fish——

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Abstract: Among his numerous works, Paul Klee depicted various kinds of animals, in particular birds and fish. While animals have historically been a motif in a large number of Western paintings, depiction of them as a main motif is quite rare.

In the age of the Renaissance, Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brueghel depicted fish which were symbolically relevant to Christianity and Christian culture. In the 20th century, Giorgio de Chirico also used fish as a religious symbol. Although Franz Mark introduced mammals in the main motif, Klee depicted birds and fish with unique and humorous forms and lines. Klee, knowing the aesthetic beauty, mysticism, and vital strength which are essentially inherent in fish and birds, wished to express these in purer and more primitive forms and lines.

Fish in particular seldom become a central motif of painting. What Klee derived from fish is the simple forms and lines by which mammals may never be adequately expressed. Klee found essential beauty and freedom in the life of fish and in their swimming in aquatic nature. Furthermore, he found that drawing fish with simpler and more primitive forms and lines concurred with his ideas on art. The essence of fish, their vividness, agility, vigor, and energy as wildlife are expressed in their pure form. What Klee pursued through drawing fish is this pureness and beauty of life. On the other hand, Klee never failed to inspire a sense of humour and cynical insight into his symbolic expression of fish. Primitivism and symbolism are mingled sufficiently to realize his unique art. Paul Klee elaborately utilized symbolism and the style of primitivism, making fish a main motif in Western art in the 20th century.

Key words: Fish, Primitivism, Cynical insight, Form and Line

1 Introduction

Franz Mark, a friend of Paul Klee since the days of “Der Blaue Reiter movement,” had drawn many animals, most of them mammals. Mark concentrated on drawing animals and the landscapes in which they live. His motivation was very simple; he was above all interested in the purity and beauty of the life of animals. He showed no interest in other things apart from this. Klee noted of Mark that, “He is more human, he loves more warmly, is more demonstrative.

He responds to animals as if they were human. ...In Mark the bond with the earth takes precedence over the bond with the universe.” (Diary: 1008) This suggestion certainly shows one side of Mark’s humanistic personality. Klee had great respect for him and was devastated when he heard the news of his sad demise at the front line in 1917. While Klee was affected by the disaster of the world war, he rarely expressed the terrible misery in his works plainly. Rather, he inspired much literary wit, irony, or humour in his works. In this respect, Paul Klee was also a noted humanistic artist. Yet, his ideas on art and painting were different from his friend, and from Wassily Kandinsky

who developed abstract art with Klee in this period. Klee also drew animals. He surely loved cats, yet his preference in animals lay rather in birds and fish, not mammals. He recognized pure and beautiful existence, although, essentially, his ideas on art were based more on cynical insights and cool humour, revealing his uniquely severe philosophy of art. And as for the style of his painting, primitive forms and lines influenced his style of abstraction with childish images. The works of birds and fish also contain these aspects, particularly childish depictions and primitivism.

It is necessary to consider the aspects of Klee's expression of birds and fish, especially with regards to the latter. Even if the fish motif belongs to his minor works, it is possible to identify Klee's cynical insights and philosophy on art through consideration of these works, partly because Klee was fundamentally conscious of the motifs of life and death, he strove to express the essence of 'life.' Drawing fish followed the line of his essential purpose: expression of life and death.

The purpose of this study is to find aspects of Paul Klee's primitivism through understanding the form and line of his fish images.

2 Fish as a motif in painting

As for the images of fish in Western painting, there is a tradition that fish are utilized as a symbol of Christianity, or as a metaphor for Christ. The figure of fish as described in the motif of *The Last Supper* of mosaic art in the age of the Byzantine Empire is different from depictions of other creatures in Christian culture. (Fig. 1)¹ Whereas the symbolic image of fish is generalized, it is at the same time used as a motif of evil that realizes ominous portents. As an aquatic creature, the fish is regarded as being 'born in water.' In other words, resurrection in water may represent an evil existence. For example, Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brueghel (the elder) treat fish as such devilish beings. Particularly, Bosch in particular skillfully depicts fish in ambiguous images: evil, holiness, and mysticism are mingled together. In *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, the fish plays a role as one of the devilish monsters which tempt

and torment St. Anthony, the face and figure are voracious and violent. But in *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, fish are depicted for many people as God's creatures, and as such are held by humans. Most humans are described with expressions of innocence, stupidity, childishness, or simpleminded purity. Creatures such as mammals, birds, or fish are described with more naturally vivid and wild images. Fish, though depicted out of water, are carefully held by these humans, as if fish were superior entity. In this work, it is certain that nature including animals and plants (and monsters) is treated as an ultimate and fundamental whole created by God. Nature, animals and plants reflect this overwhelming world, where they rank superior to human beings. (Fig. 2) What Bosch intended to describe is mainly the helpless stupidity of humankind, and alternatively the purity of innocence. This vision was partly inherited by Brueghel. In such a world view, the existence of humans is dwarfed and miserable (therefore, they suffer and are punished in hell). Birds fly with vigor, the cheetah marches around, proud of itself. Fish are depicted larger in size than humans and they can respire in the atmosphere through gills held by humans. Wild creatures appear to be sacred and vivid among numerous humans who are childish and innocent. The fish is positioned as a highly vital entity among fellow vertebrates. At least in this panel painting, the figure of the fish seems respectable and to have a kind of dignity as a creature of God. But in other works, fish-like creatures are described as fearful monsters. Hence a dual meaning, of both sacredness and evil, is expounded in the images of fish.

Brueghel, influenced by the expression of Bosch, also uses fish as a kind of symbol. His fish seem to be more evil and grotesque beings. In *A Big Fish Engulfs Small Ones*, the image of fish is seemingly voracious symbolizing greediness; at the same time this implies a merciless food chain and may represent a metaphor for human greediness. Larger fish engulf smaller ones, one after the other, like nesting baskets, and many fish are swallowed as small prey. Ultimately, humans catch and slice up all of them. (Fig. 3)

Brueghel's fish are not sacred, but mystic and monster-like creatures, as is suggested in *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*. In this work a number of fallen angels are

transformed into fish-like creatures which are expelled from heaven for their evil rebellion. (Fig. 4) In the case of Brueghel, the fish tends to be treated as a form of ugly evil, symbolic of ominous disaster. In other words, the fish is a metaphorical image of an opponent to Christianity. Both Bosch and Brueghel described fish as beings inspired by religious imagination, albeit in a mixed context of Christianity and evil.²

In the 20th century, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque also occasionally preferred aquatic organisms as their subjects. Braque left some works in which fish are simply expressed as static objects. However, what they aimed at was to challenge new techniques. In an innovative and revolutionary concept of art, they drew fish and other aquatic organisms yet the fish were not of great importance in their ideas of art. Among modern painters, Giorgio de Chirico who loved the sea frequently described images fish, or inserted fish in the landscapes of his painting. *I pesci sacri* (1918) and *I nuotatore misterioso* (1935?) are examples. In particular, *I pesci sacri* (*Sacred Fish* in English) is a symbolically religious work of modern times. (Fig. 5) Two fish are laid in the form of Christian cross on a board. Though they are dried, the color and form are vivid, showing Chirico's strong religious motif. In this view, Braque's fish are also represented in a somewhat crossed-form, alluding to Christ's cross, although it is uncertain whether he willingly intended a religious meaning or not. (Fig. 6)

In the same age, Franz Marc who loved to introduce animals as a motif, was observed to seldom utilize fish as a theme. This may be because mammals were the creatures he could tackle with greatest affection. Generally, fish are regarded as creatures belonging to a lower-class of organism; they seem to lack intelligence, and are hard to become objects of affection, like companion mammals, or wildlife like deer, horses, foxes, dogs and cats—all of which Marc willingly used as motifs. In Western paintings, even if it is a symbol of Christ, in most cases the fish seldom becomes the main motif of a painting.

In Eastern art, traditional paintings of birds and flowers in China or Japan are the best examples of depictions of nature. Many kinds of birds, animals, and fish become a

main motif of paintings; birds in particular are described in flowers, trees, and seasonal landscapes. (Fig. 7) Birds and animals are depicted within the beauty of transitional nature. All living things themselves are a symbol of nature in the viewpoint of the East. This view is propagated through Buddhism (or Hinduism): namely, that all organisms and substances of nature are recognized in all things in the universe. Chinese or Japanese paintings of birds and flowers express such dignity and aesthetic mystery. Organisms are beautifully depicted in harmony with nature.³ The belief of the cycle of reincarnation in Buddhism shows that fundamentally equality exists among all creatures. The idea of "still life" painting does not exist in the Eastern tradition.

Benjamin Blake, Édouard Manet, or William Merit Chase had depicted fish as still life in the 19th century. Especially, Manet's fish is famous. Fruits, vessels, instruments, or fish were used as an object for depiction in Western painting. Picasso or Braque also preferred fishery products and instruments in their works as an object of still life painting in the 20th century. But it is supposed that Klee did not treat fish as an object of still life. Since he felt more vivid energy in fish living in water, as an organism in fish, he expressed it in more unique and original form and line. In effect, Klee regarded fish as one of the main characters which are personified in his works.

In the case of fish, although fish swimming in a school seem surely wonderful, their form is totally different from terrestrial mammals or birds. With respect to the characteristics of birds, there are some significant factors which make them the main objects of illustration. The form of the wings may be comparable with angels and their ability to fly to heaven, also suggesting continuous progress or freedom. Diversified colours of feathers infer an object of respect. Sharp eyes and beaks or beautiful tails which mammals do not have provide a unique impression. Their figure is symbolic to the extent that they become emblems of nations or symbols of municipal cities or towns. Even in Islamic arabesque, the form basically consists of plants and trees, and in effect birds are recognized among the complex plants and beautiful expressions of arabesque mode. In both Western and Eastern art, the figure of birds,



Fig. 1 Mosaic art of the Last Supper in Church of Sant'Applinare, 6c. Nuovo, Ravenna



Fig. 2 Hieronymus Bosch *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, The Prado, Madrid (the parts of the central panel)

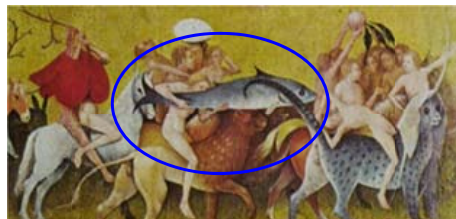


Fig. 3 Pieter Brueghel *A Big Fish Engulfs Small Ones*, British Museum, London



Fig. 4 Pieter Brueghel *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*, 1562, Royal Museum, Brussels



Fig. 3 Giorgio de Chirico *Sacred Fish*, 1918, The Museum of Modern Art, New York



Fig. 6 Georges Braque *Black Fish*, 1942, Pompidou Centre Paris



Fig. 7 呂紀 秋鷺芙蓉, Ming Dynasty, National Palace Museum, Taipei

including waterfowl, are described and admired equally. It is understandable that the form of the bird is regarded as absolutely beautiful.

On the other hand, fish as suggested above, gain a symbolic role that has become peripheral in the transition of the time. In the 20th century, most painters depicted humans, landscapes or abstract images. Importance was not put on fish as a motif. Nevertheless, Paul Klee made use of this creature with a more sophisticated style. He incorporated figures of birds and fish in his works, and dared to positively focus on them as motifs. This is surely due to his personality and love of animals. Yet, he infused much symbolic meaning into these small animals.

3 Expression of "Fish" in Klee's Art

Klee kept cats which were his favorite companions in his life. Though he loved cats in particular, he seldom described them in his works, instead preferring to frequently focus on birds as subjects. His affection for animals reveals his gentle personality, yet his view on animals is different from that of Mark. Klee's creations are processed through his cynical insights and symbolism. *The Twittering Machine* is an example which shows such insight. (Fig. 8) Klee cherished special feelings for birds and the idea of flight, perhaps resulting from his experiences during the war when he worked at an air force base. He holds a special admiration for this small animal, which is probably rooted in aesthetic mystery and pure beauty. A bird has a sharp beak and twitters in a small voice. It possesses a slender anatomy, and flexible and colourful wings and feathers; none of these forms correspond to terrestrial mammals. But birds in this particular work have distinctively machine-like bodies. Their wiry bodies connected to a crank seem to be being forced to chirp and twitter. Vacant eyes and wide-opened beaks with protruding arrows seem to exclaim something. These bird-like machines symbolize anxiety or some slight resistance.⁴

Another example is the *Landscape with Yellow Birds*. (Fig. 9) The seven yellow birds enjoy and play in an imaginary world in this work. Colourful plants seem almost

like algae from the sea, conjuring a jungle-like illusion. The overall effect seems unrealistic. The forms and colours emphasize isolation from the human world and a kind of paradise that rejects violation by humankind. Yellow birds are depicted as living a very pure existence in the landscape, displaying their aesthetic beauty and showing pleasure in nature. Their existence is purely primitive and essentially attributed to a mystic nature. Primitive form and free colours contribute to a depiction of birds' pure and independent existence in its original expression.

In the case of drawing fish, the concept is the same as for Klee's depictions of birds.

He deals with fish as a motif many times. The form attracted him, and he also treated them in particular ways in his works. With regard to his representative works on fish, it may be recognized that there are two principal ways that fish are expressed:

- A pure description of fish as organisms using primitive forms and lines
- An expression of fish as more sophisticatedly symbolic motifs

It is therefore important to consider the features of each mode of expression respectively, in the context of Klee's ideas on art and animals.

First, Klee wished to purely express fish as schools swimming in water. For Klee, fish were the most impressive animals that he had observed during his life. He enjoyed fishing and found the unique form of fish interesting; later, he abandoned fishing because he found the act itself cruel and hesitated to catch them simply for his own interest.⁵ Fish have a unique and ideal anatomy as objects for painting. They have simpler lines than other vertebrates, including birds and mammals, simply because mammals and birds have more complicated anatomy. Klee depicted them appropriately with primitive forms and lines. They can swim freely and swiftly with agility and are specially adapted for water. Their streamlined bodies and silvery scales probably attracted Klee's observation. As independent swimmers they symbolize freedom and the vivid life of living things. Klee frequently visited aquariums to observe them. His work, *Fish Magic*, is obviously based on an observation at an aquarium. (Fig.

10) The main motif is swimming fish in the aquarium, and the observer, Klee himself, is positioned at the bottom of the work and has a dual face, looking joyfully at the fish. A clock which shows time lapse is set in the center of the painting and around it six fish are swimming. He noted various kinds of aquatic organisms which affected him and provided him with motifs for painting. Their form influenced Klee's theory of form and line for expression, which is explained in *Das Bildnerische Denken (Formative Thinking)*. Fig. 11 (*Picture of a Fish*) shows a drawing of a fish swimming in an aquarium. The frame is also painted in blue, suggesting that this is a scene encountered in an aquarium. Klee tried to describe the movement of each of the fish which are swimming freely in a body of water; some which are swimming vertically, others horizontally, or wriggling abruptly. Some swimming in the inner part of the aquarium look smaller. (the fish immediately in front of an observer look larger.) Simple lines and forms are effective for expressing vividness in the aquarium. These two works show only swimming fish, thereby exhibiting their most essential trait. The act of swimming is fundamentally different from the behaviour of terrestrial mammals, an aspect to which Klee paid attention with keen interest. Although the lines are very simple and primitive, the whole composition and expression is quite original; no artists have attempted to describe fish in this kind of peculiar style. His style of painting is fundamentally based on his theory of art. He adopted simpler and more primitive forms and lines which he thought were more effective in expressing the subjects of his paintings. He tried to express the essence of an object from different angles. Multiple angles and thin, simple lines enabled him to express in painting his keen observations of fish in aquariums. This is truly an original perspective approach. It may be supposed that Klee pursued drawing the 'movement' of fish in water by using primitive forms and lines in *A School of Fish*. (Fig. 12) Gradation of lines is used effectively, presenting agile movement and the swimming motion of fish. No other work reveals a more rhythmical movement expressed by layers of gradation than this. Each fish swims freely in the waves of sea water; the expression realizes the movement of both the fish and the waves in the body of water. For Klee, fish

mean existence which makes him feel the pure vitality of living things and can become an appropriate object for his drawings through this idea of unique primitivism. In contrast, similar gradation for plants reveals their regular movements. The growth of plants at a certain rate and speed can be recognized; they grow steadily towards the light of the sun. Regular and steady gradation of the beautiful lines expresses the growth of plants, which is completely different from the movement of fish. (Fig. 13) But this also suggests that Klee admired the vigor and energy of plants as living things.

Second, it is recognized that fish play a more symbolic role in his other works. As another feature, Klee tried to set a fish in the center of a canvas. This means an individual fish becomes the main theme, emphasizing its existence in the core of the canvas. For example, his most representative work on fish is shown in *Around the Fish*, where the subject is placed on a dish. (Fig. 14) The fish in this mysterious work is understood as a foodstuff, surrounded by artificially strange vessels, flowers and the head of a man. However, it is necessary to note that the dish is not usual one, but a kind of laboratory dish with depth, also containing some algae, and the face of fish is shown slightly smiling. An arrow that is pointed towards the head of a man indicates consumption by man, allowing us to infer that the fish will surely be eaten by the dwarfen head. Some small flower-like windmills seem to secretly suggest a food chain, their shapes among the artificial vessels somehow endowing circulating power around the fish. The fish is placed in the middle of the canvas, with artificial glass-like vessels randomly arranged around it. But the fish is far larger than the bodiless dwarfen head, placed at the top of a straw-like substance. May we assume that the dwarfen, aged man is a symbol of eating (the exclamation mark suggesting cruelty of 'eating'), even though the large fish overwhelms the dwarfen head at the top of the food chain? It is supposed that Klee wished to emphasize the fish as a powerful being which is usually provided as sustenance. The blue dish suggests oceans, and artificial vessels are associated with human society.⁶ The fish is so large that even a tiny "cross" near the fish's head is hardly paid attention to by those who look at this painting. Its existence surpasses religious

symbolism. Klee converts the usual aspects of small life into something great by using primitively pure forms and lines. Ultimately, this work includes critical cynicism of humans in its humour. The sun, the moon, sea plants and vessels are scattered around the fish. The strong existence of the fish is fixed in the core of the canvas (another fish is beneath it) as the main motif, with other objects placed as peripheral factors, surrounding the main fish.

Another most representative masterpiece on fish can be seen in *The Goldfish*. (Fig. 15) Some critics think this golden fish represents a kind of 'miracle,' in which it controls everything around it, the world of dark blue and the other small fish, as a lord of the sea.⁷ The other seven small fish head away from the golden lord, escaping from it silently. The goldfish has a dual meaning: it swims as a lord of sea, and keeps itself above all the vulgarity around it, allowing no other fish to swim close to it. This composition which is different from *Around the Fish* is characteristic of the unique individuality of fish. The former is characteristic of the fish's individuality of association with others, mainly with humans. As generally understood, there are two approaches to explicate this work:

- The goldfish is a kind of lord who dominates the sea, imbuing others with awe.
- The goldfish is so beautiful that all other fish simply avoid it, leaving it in solitude.

This work has dual meanings: noble solitude, and a magnificently absolute monarch. Either explanation may be possible: the expression of the fish is very unique—an

isolated individual who will never compromise with anyone around it. The strong yellow colour reveals its pride as a fish; the look with twinkling eyes releases a sharp radiation of energy. Its position serves to emphasize its existence. The form bears some resemblance to a 'lozenge' and is significantly conspicuous, rejecting the approaches of others. The area surrounding it is painted in a darker indigo blue that also highlights swimming in depth. Non-existent colour of the fin (in red), the eye, and the body suggest an alienation of being a fish. Solitude, nobleness, arrogance, and loneliness are mingled together, symbolizing something that is applied not only to the sea but to the world of humankind. This most representative fish by Klee shows allusion to personified fish.

The primitive forms and lines of these two works play an important role in each. Fish which have very simple anatomy attract humans. They are sometimes regarded as food, sometimes as objects of aesthetic beauty, and at other times as freely swimming animals in water. Klee skillfully manipulates the form and line in order to describe the essence of movement, feature, and existence with his own characteristic expression of humour, and symbolization. Fish became a major motif in Western painting beyond religious metaphor. By means of reduction to essential forms and lines through the fish's own anatomy, Klee expressed something important that is related to life and death through his drawings of fish. This unique idea, conveyed through the primitive forms and lines is a part of the essential philosophy of Klee's art.



Fig. 8 *The Twittering Machine*, 1922
The Museum of Modern
Art, New York



Fig. 9 *Landscape with Yellow Birds*,
1923
Private collection, Basel



Fig. 10 *The Fish Magic*, 1925
Philadelphia Museum
of Art

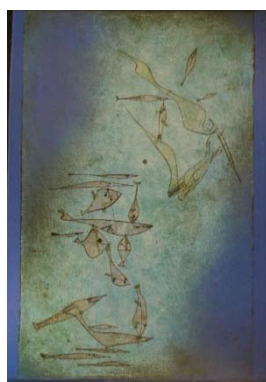


Fig. 11 *Picture of a Fish*, 1925
The Rosengart
Collection, Lucerne



Fig. 12 *A School of Fish*, 1921
Private collection,
Hamburg



Fig. 13 *Growth of Plants*, 1921
Pompidou Centre, Paris.



Fig. 14 *Around the Fish*, 1925
The Museum of Modern Art,
New York



Fig. 15 *The Goldfish*, 1925
Hamburg Arthall, Hamburg

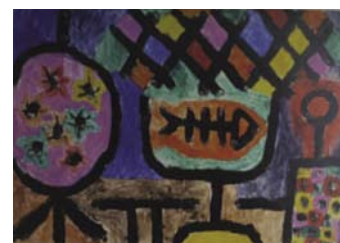


Fig. 16 *Antiquated Still Life*, 1940
Private collection

4. Conclusion: Paul Klee's primitivism and idea on art

It is often suggested that Klee's painting is basically literal. This is partly true, for his thoughts are greatly revealed in his diaries. Furthermore, his theory on form and line is supported by his literary talent; he developed ideas on metaphorical symbols, or allusion, wit and cynical humour through consideration of form and line, especially during his time on the teaching staff of the "Bauhaus." Persistent discipline and profound reflection created a uniquely symbolic form and line, leading to a primitive essence for painting.

This idea of primitive form and line is critically important for Klee's art. He believed that every excessive line and form should be reduced, leaving the essential structure, namely the primitive form and line. Klee assumed that the most important thing for an artist is to

draw the essence which is inherent in an object. His belief "Art does not reproduce what is visible, but makes things visible" reveals his essential idea. Since he is not a painter of the Western "realism" tradition, he hoped to express the essence of an object through introspection. The act of reducing the essence to primitive forms and lines involved finding inspiration in every image and symbolism inherent in the object. Illustration-like simple and plain expression based on primitive forms and lines was essential for his art. In the process, form and line were linked with infant-like characteristics.

"Will and discipline are everything. Discipline as regards the work as a whole, will as regards its parts. Will and craft are intimately joined here; here, the man who can't do, can't will. The work then accomplishes itself out of these parts thanks to discipline that is directed toward the whole. If my works sometimes produce a primitive impression, this "primitiveness" is explained by my discipline, which

consists in reducing everything to a few steps. It is no more than economy; that is, the ultimate professional awareness. Which is to say, the opposite of real primitiveness.” (Diary: 857) Klee’s formative thinking which led to the idea of primitivism was not an easy solution to realize his art. The most important thing for him was serious discipline through thinking of images and objects. What Klee attempted was to make the effort that ‘makes things visible.’ Things are inherent in the object, and his creative images on a motif. In the case of fish, Klee draws the pure movement and vividness that fish innately possess as aquatic life, according to his idea of primitive form and line. On the other hand, he also tried to describe symbolic meanings. The fish is a being that is always eaten by humans. They are caught, cooked, and consumed as a normal part of our lives. (Birds are not included in this activity.) In *Around the Fish*, Klee expressed such a fate for fish with cynical insight and humour. In *The Goldfish*, what the personified gold fish implies is solitude and aloofness from others, even though the gold fish is shining beautifully.

Klee, through observing fish, considered them to be symbolically humorous beings which are representative symbols of life and death. They swim independently in water, reproduce numerous offspring, and are caught by humans. They are easily understandable through their cycle of life and death. Klee was inspired to develop the theme of life and death in his symbolic works, through seriously cynical insights and with a sophisticated sense of humour. Klee continued to depict fish until the end of his life. In *Antiquated Still Life*, only a skeleton placed on a table is depicted in the center.⁸ That the fish has lost its body alludes to his own approaching death. Klee shows intimacy with this organism until the last, and never forgets to express his cynical form of humour. This is a direct result of Klee’s sharp insights. Primitive forms and lines are inevitable means for his expression. The motif, fish, also served as an indispensable creature for his expression throughout his life as a painter.

Notes

1 The relation between Klee and fish is explained in detail by

Senzoku.

- 2 The expression of antagonism between the sacred and evil in Christianity is well described by both Bosch and Brueghel, but the theme is treated almost entirely by using unique ‘humour,’ and never described with serious nor religious implications.
- 3 Since the era of the Song and Ming dynasties, Chinese painting of birds and flowers had established its expression as a real and solemn style of drawing, a style which was transmitted to Japan.
- 4 Douglas Hall suggests that the birds in this work are symbols of violence, and the arrows protruding from the birds’ mouths imply the intention of violence. However, the crank connected with the birds is the driving tool for an airplane, hinted at by Klee’s experience in the military. The author thinks the symbol is not of violence, but ‘anxiety.’ Mechanized birds moved by the crank only twitter as a result of the movement. The pale blue background suggests transient twittering, or else Klee’s attempt to criticize political pressure that Nazism gradually placed on the “Bauhaus.”
- 5 According to Felix Klee’s recollections, Paul Klee went fishing many times in a lake, cooking his catch for his family and cat.
- 6 These glass-like vessels give an impression which is quite similar to those described by Bosch in *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. However, there is no evidence that Klee was influenced by Bosch. It is thought that the glass sphere or glass pillar are related to the creation of the world as depicted in the Bible. Kanbara suggests that glass pillars are constructed for the purpose of supporting the world, effectively acting as tools for disaster prevention.
- 7 Christian Geelhaar suggests “ The glistening miracle fish, in transitory, energy-filled motionlessness, illuminating the dark blue dusky world into which the little fish flee.” There is a tendency to believe that this goldfish is a miraculous being that is a lord of the sea.(This suggestion is referred to in *Paul Klee*, Taschen (p.60).)
- 8 The most famous work is *Mud Woodlouse Fish*. A very humorous form of fish like a woodlouse, depicted in the same year, 1940, as Klee passed away.

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